

example of a baby viper that has swallowed another as long as itself. It died shortly afterwards.

MADRAS SNAKE PARK,  
180, VELACHERY ROAD,  
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MADRAS-45,

ROMULUS WHITAKER

March, 1971.

#### 16. A SNAKE-FROG INCIDENT

On 20th January 1971, while at the Khodija Falls, some 40 miles out of Karachi, my brother Shumoon picked up a dead 29" snake *Coluber rhodorhachis* (?) by the side of the flowing stream. A frog's hind leg projected from a tear in the side, 10" from the snout; a closer examination revealed that the frog (*Rana cyanophlyctis*, 48 mm. from snout to vent) had not been swallowed head first as is usual, but by the hind legs. A couple of inches before the rent where the frog's leg extruded was another smaller tear, indicating that the snake had had a grim struggle.

The Khodija Falls, at the bottom of a deep rocky valley, are visible only at close quarters. The drop is barely 15 feet but the flow of clear water, the pool at the bottom, the green vegetation at the sides, and the high cliff in the background, all present a most delightful scene in an otherwise barren wilderness. Several of the surrounding rocks are embedded with fossil-shells and fossils of starfish and other marine forms appear to be strewn profusely over the area. Our party picked up specimens of starfish and a crenoid during our short visit.

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February 12, 1971.

#### 17. AN ABNORMAL SPECIMEN OF *BRACHIRUS ORIENTALIS* (SCHN.) FROM PULICAT LAKE

*Brachirus orientalis* (Schn.) is a common sole along the coasts of India (Misra 1959). Recently the species was recorded from Pulicat Lake as a new record (Selvanathan & Kaliyamurthy, in press). It is available in the lake throughout the year and is considered to be a delicacy.

A female *Brachirus orientalis*, measuring 179 mm. in total length, was collected from near the shore of the lake at Arambakkam on

24.xii.1965. This specimen showed abnormal features in the development of the eyes and was slightly larger than the previous records (maximum size 165 mm.) (Misra op. cit.).

Although no differences are apparent in the meristic characters of the fins and scales, the body height, head length and diameter of the eye of the specimen are slightly less when compared to a normal specimen (Table 1). The lower eye is altogether absent and is represented by a white depression covered by a fold of the skin. The upper eye is otherwise normal except for the slightly reduced size and is protruded and tilted towards the mouth. A transparent membrane, resembling an eyelid, is clearly visible close to the lower margin of the upper eye, directed towards the snout, and this is absent in normal specimens. An outgrowth of muscular tissue is also noticed on the dorsal side of the upper eye. In all other features the present specimen resembles the normal form.

TABLE 1

Character	Abnormal specimen	Normal specimen
Total length/head length. . . . .	5.88	4.2-5.3
Total length/height of body . . . . .	2.28	2.0-2.2
Head length/diameter of eye . . . . .	8.24	5.0-8.0

Abnormal features such as ambicoloration, albinism, arrested rotation of eyes, reversal of sides are well known in flat fishes but the total absence of the lower eye and the peculiar features noticed in the upper eye do not seem to have been reported previously.

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